



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



DUAL DAY OF RECOGNITION

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman and Deputy Secretary Pollard visited the Colman-Egan School today to say "thank you" to the students, teachers, staff and administration for their commitment and on-going support of South Dakota's veterans.

The Colman-Egan School has a legacy of honoring our heroes via Memorial Day and Veterans Day programs, Valentines for Veterans, support for the Honor Flight Program, and the creation of a Wall of Honor, to name a few.

Today, the Colman-Egan Hawks learned to reply Hoooooaaaah for "Go Hawks!" "Their dedication to any program for veterans is received with a great desire to accomplish the mission," said Zimmerman. "The Colman-Egan students are dedicated to thanking their veterans for service to fighting for our freedoms." Secretary Zimmerman presented the students with a U.S. Flag that had flown in their honor at the South Dakota State Capitol, along with a certificate of authenticity and two SDDVA coins.

Unknown to them Secretary Zimmerman and Deputy Secretary Pollard were recognized by the Colman-Egan school for their continued dedication to enhancing the lives of South Dakota Veterans. Pollard and Zimmerman have been added to their "Wall of Honor."

Moody County Veterans Service Officer Jim Delay, was honored to attend the ceremony in support of both groups!

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PURCELL JOINS PENNINGTON COUNTY TEAM OF EXPERTS GUIDING VETERANS

Alex Purcell has joined the team at the Pennington County Veterans Services. Alex will serve as a VSO, assisting veterans and their families.

Alex and his wife Jessica are kept busy with their three boys — Zander (5 years), Jonas (3 years), and Peyton 10 (months).

Prior to becoming a Veterans Service Officer, Alex worked for the Pennington County Jail as a correctional officer. Alex served in the Army for nearly eight years and was stationed in Korea, Ft. Benning GA, and Ft. Riley KS. He deployed twice to Iraq in that time as well.

When not working or parenting, Alex likes to find time to enjoy the outdoors - biking, hiking, fishing, shooting, football, and other outdoor activities. His favorite sports team is the Chicago Bears (we'll try not to hold that against him!) , Alex will tell you that he doesn't have a favorite food- but anything that involves friends and family and grilling-out is best.

Please join us in welcoming Alex to the veteran network. His email address is: alexander.purcell@pennco.org.



SD ELKS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT MEDAL OF HONOR HEROES

The South Dakota Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks donated \$600 to the purchase of flags for the "Medal of Honor" memorials.

The Elks have been providing funds since the memorials were created. These funds are used to buy four each of the United States, South Dakota and POW/MIA flags for each of the Medal of Honor Memorial sites.

Kudos to the Elks for their ongoing support of all of our heroes!



ST. THOMAS MORE PURPLES UP FOR MILITARY KIDS!

Students and parents wearing the color purple filled the high school gymnasium at St. Thomas More for the school's "Purple Up! For Military Kids Day" April 15.

April is nationally known as "Month of the Military Child," and children across the state are getting together to show their support, said Sheila Troxel Snyder, operation military kids coordinator.

In tribute to the 7,500 military children in the state, South Dakota's Operation: Military Kids Program, part of the 4-H Youth Development program of SDSU Co-operative Extension invite South Dakota communities, businesses and organizations to wear purple on April 15.

"The color purple represents all of the branches in the service," said Snyder. "This is a great way to visually show military kids that they are appreciated for all of their sacrifices and responsibilities they take on when their parent or family member is serving away from home."

St. Thomas More senior, Caitlin Oster, president of the SDNG Youth Council and member of the Purple Up committee spoke about how being a military child has developed her into an independent, strong-willed individual.

"Being a military child has made me so independent and a strong-willed leader," said Oster, daughter of SDARNG's Lt. Col. Michael Oster. "Having to deal with my dad's deployments and drills makes me a "pick up parent" when he is away. I take on more responsibilities than I normally would, and I think that has made me a stronger person. It's a sacrifice but rewarding at the same time."

Guest speakers for the event included Rapid City Mayor Sam Kookier, South Dakota National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch and U.S. Air Force Col. Kerry Britt, commander of the 28th Mission Support Group at Ellsworth Air Force Base.

"It is great and impressive that St. Thomas More set aside a whole hour of their school day to honor the military child," said Reisch.



St. Thomas More senior,
Caitlin Oster



Rapid City Mayor Sam
Kookier



Adjutant General, Maj. Gen.
Tim Reisch

During the event the students were asked to stand up if they are a military child, or if they have a brother, sister, aunt or uncle serving in the military. Almost everyone stood up, said Reisch.

"In today's military many kids have watched their parents deploy overseas and go into combat and that is something they didn't sign up for. It is something they have had to deal with," said Reisch. "We are indebted to the families and children for all they do."

PURPLE UP (CONTINUED)

St. Thomas More student Trevor Bartunek, the son of a dual-military couple Lt. Col. Deb and Lt. Col. Ted Bartunek who serve in the SDARNG, read Gov. Dennis Daugaard's proclamation to mark April 2015 as the Month of the Military Child in South Dakota.

Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker followed suit and invited all of the military kids to stand next to him at the podium as he read his proclamation to make April 15 as "Purple Up! For Military Kids Day," in Rapid City – a special day to show local support of our military children and families.



HOT SPRINGS, A TOWN THAT KNOWS HOW TO

Hot Springs Mayor Cindy Donnell signed a mayoral proclamation, setting aside April 15 as "Purple Up! For Military Kids Day," in the city, a proclamation that encourages everyone to wear purple on that day to thank military children and families in the area. Mayor Cindy Donnell, center, presented proclamation to local representatives from the American Legion, veterans service groups and others, encouraging that everyone



wear purple on April 15 in support of military kids and families. Dan Cullen Fall River CTVSO (center back row in picture to the right) was part of the team challenging all to "Purple Up"

Staff at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home proudly "Purpled UP."

(Photos courtesy of Curt Nettinga/Hot Springs Star)

Upcoming Events

Apr. 23—ICVCSF Conference—Aberdeen

Apr 24—ISVCSF Conference-Yankton

May 1-3—DAV Convention—Sioux Falls Holiday Inn City Centre

May 5—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sturgis (Veterans Club—868 Main Street) —10:00 am (MT)

May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre (Post 8 American Legion—520 S. Pierre Street) —10:00 am

May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sioux Falls (VA Regional Office) —9:00 am

Jun. 18-21—VFW State Convention—Yankton, SD

Jun. 24—Black Hills Job Fair—Western Dakota Tech—Rapid City—12:30—5:00 pm (MT)

Jun.. 25-28—American Legion 97th Annual State Convention—Huron Crossroads Convention Center

Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

Aug. 5-9—AVTT Traveling Vietnam Wall Comes to Sioux Falls (Sanford Pentagon Sports Complex)

Aug. 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota—Pierre

Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

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